

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 ACDA-07 IO-13 /099 W

-----092152Z 096206 /21

R 091405Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3014

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 2943

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, ET, US

SUBJECT: ERITREAN REQUEST FOR DIALOGUE

REF: (A) STATE 100281, (B) ADDIS ABABA 2792, (C) JIDDA 3268

1. SOME ERITREAN REPRESENTATIVES ARE PERMANENTLY ASSIGNED TO DAMASCUS AND OTHERS REGULARLY TRANSIT SYRIAN CAPITAL. ELF MAINTAINS OFFICE HERE AND WE OBTAIN REPORTS OF ELF ACTIVITIES FROM ITALIAN EMBOFF WHO MEETS WITH THEM. SYRIAN MEDIA PUBLICIZE VISITS TO DAMASCUS OF ELF LEADER AHMAD NASSIR AND HIS TALKS WITH SARG AND BAATH PARTY OFFICIALS. PLF LEADER OSMAN SABBE ALSO MAINTAINS RESIDENCE IN DAMASCUS, AND AS DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL, EMBOFF MET WITH SABBE ON CONFIDENTIAL

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INSTRUCTIONS IN 1976 AS PART OF USG EFFORTS TO OBTAIN RELEASE OF AMERICAN PRISONERS HELD BY ERITREANS. (SABBE CONVERSATION REPORTED 76 DAMASCUS 414 NOTAL.)

2. OUR MEETING WITH SABBE WAS ARRANGED BY SYRIAN INTER-MEDIARY WHOSE USEFULNESS AS POINT OF CONTACT WITH ERITREANS WAS SUGGESTED TO US BY MFA OFFICIAL RESPONSIBLE

FOR AMERICAN AFFAIRS. WHEN MEETING ARRANGED, IT WAS ON UNDERSTANDING THAT THIS WAS EXCEPTION TO OUR NORMAL POLICY OF NOT MEETING WITH ERITREAN REPS. THIS WAS MADE CLEAR BECAUSE SABBE AND INTERMEDIARY BOTH ENQUIRED ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF FUTURE CONTACTS. WE REPEATED OUR POSITION TO SYRIAN PHOTOGRAPHER WHO HAD MET WITH CAPTIVES IN ERITREA AND WHOM DEPT REQUESTED WE APPROACH TO RAISE ISSUE OF RETURN TRIP TO ERITREA TO MEET HIS ERITREAN CONTACTS, AND WHO ENQUIRED WHETHER WE WOULD MEET WITH LOCAL ERITREAN REPS. ITALIAN EMBOFF HAS ALSO TOLD US ELF OFFICIALS IN DAMASCUS OFFICE WOULD LIKE TO MEET WITH EMBASSY REPS, BUT WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY REITERATED POLICY AGAINST SUCH MEETINGS WHENEVER SUBJECT WAS RAISED.

3. WE HAVE REVIEWED THESE PAST ACTIONS FOR TWO REASONS: FIRST, DAMASCUS HAS PROVED OF SOME USEFULNESS AS A LISTENING POST REGARDING ERITREANS. WE HAVE ALREADY ESTABLISHED PRECEDENT OF MEETING WITH AN ERITREAN LEADER HERE (SABBE), AND INFORMED SARG OFFICIALLY THAT MEETING HAD TAKEN PLACE (WE ARE CERTAIN SARG SECURITY FULL INFORMED OF THESE CONTACTS BY OUR INTERMEDIARIES). AT NO TIME DID SARG RAISE ANY OBJECTION TO OUR EFFORTS. SINCE EVERYONE OF CONSEQUENCE INVOLVED LOCALLY IN ERITREAN ISSUE KNOWS OUR PREVIOUS POSITION ON ANY FURTHER DIRECT OR INDIRECT APPROACHES FROM ERITREANS IN DAMASCUS. WE HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT ERITREANS LESS INTERESTED IN MEETING WITH US NOW THAN IN PAST. FOR EXAMPLE, TIME CORRESPONDENT WILTON WYNN WAS ENTHUSIASTICALLY RECEIVED BY LOCAL ERITREAN REPS DURING RECENT VISIT TO DAMASCUS.

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4. GIVEN THIS BACKGROUND, IT MIGHT BE BENEFICIAL FOR US IN LOW KEY WAY TO INFORM FOREIGN MINISTRY AND PERHAPS OTHERS WHO HAVE REGULARLY DISCUSSED ERITREAN MATTERS WITH US OF U.S. POLICY AS STATED PARA 2 REF A. WHETHER OR NOT SUCH AN EXPRESSION REACHED ERITREAN REPRESENTATIVES IN DAMASCUS (WE BELIEVE IT WOULD), IT WOULD BE WELCOMED BY SARG WHICH HAS LONG AND STRONGLY SUPPORTED ERITREAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT AND COULD SERVE TO IMPROVE ATMOSPHERE OF OUR POLITICAL DIALOGUE ON OTHER SUBJECTS. DEPARTMENT VIEWS REQUESTED.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, ERITREANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 09-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977DAMASC02943
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770163-0252
Format: TEL
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770580/aaaacqvn.tel
Line Count: 108
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 6b8d4698-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
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Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2602675
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ERITREAN REQUEST FOR DIALOGUE
TAGS: PFOR, PDEV, SY, ET, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/6b8d4698-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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